CASINO POKER GAME AND METHOD

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application is a continuation-in-part of co-pending application 09/315,253 filed May 20, 1999, which is incorporated herein by reference to the extent not inconsistent herewith.

BACKGROUND

Poker is a favorite gambling game widely enjoyed and understood by generations of players. The rules are simple; payoffs are relatively immediate, and both skill and luck are rewarded. The game has been adapted to electronic casino-style gaming machines where it has enjoyed a fair degree of success; however, games now known to the art either minimize the extent to which the player can win by using skill and inflate the effects of random chance, making such games less attractive to experienced poker players than would be desirable, or maximize the effects of skill so that the inexperienced player had little chance to win and little incentive to keep playing. To attract the greatest number of players, a poker game should allow and reward skill, but should also allow an unskilled player to rely on luck for winnings.

A number of U.S. patents disclose methods for playing poker games, including: 6,149,157; 6,146,271; 6,135,882; 6,132,311; 6,098,985; 5,882,260; 5,882,259; 5,868,619; 5,868,619; 5,868,618; 5,853,325; 5,851,147; 5,851,011; 5,839,731; 5,833,536; 5,823,873; 5,820,461; 5,820,460; 5,816,916; 5,816,915; 5,816,914; 5,810,663; 5,806,855; 5,803,809; 5,795,225; 5,794,964; 5,785,593; 5,775,992; 5,772,506; 5,755,621; 5,743,800; 5,732,950; 5,685,774; 5,669,817; 5,639,088; 5,636,843; 5,630,753; 5,605,504; 5,601,488; 5,591,081; 5,586,766; 5,569,082; 5,542,669; 5,531,448; 5,531,441; 5,531,440; 5,489,101 and WO 98/14250.

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All publications referred to herein are incorporated by reference to the extent not inconsistent herewith.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

Methods of playing a poker game are provided. One is a method for playing a single five-card hand and involves making an initial wager, dealing an initial three cards into the hand, deciding whether to keep playing or fold, and making an additional wager to receive a fourth card and again deciding to fold or keep playing and making an additional wager to receive a fifth card. The next step is deciding to keep or discard each card, whereupon all discarded cards are replaced and the value of the hand is calculated and paid. A second method allows play of two hands, using two separate decks. The hands may be related to each other by allowing the player the option of duplicating the first three cards dealt into a first hand into a second hand. The hands are then played as described above.

Methods of simultaneously playing multiple hands using a single deck are also provided. Three hands or five hands are preferred, and in addition, secondary hands may be compiled from selected cards in the three or five primary hands. The games are played using a single deck of cards comprising 52 cards, and optionally additional wild cards such as two jokers. Cards discarded from the first or primary hand dealt are used by the player to build other hands.

The games may be played with actual cards or with virtual cards using a programmed electronic game, preferably a casino-style game providing slots, magnetic card readers or other means for inserting money, chips, or credit numbers to activate the game, and means for paying out winnings, as are known to the art. The steps in the method of playing these games are performed either by the player or by a dealer or programmed electronic game machine in response to the player's actions.

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A method of playing a one-handed poker game is provided comprising: placing an initial wager on the value of a poker hand to be dealt; providing five positions for placement of cards in a hand; randomizing a card deck for dealing cards into the hand; dealing three cards into the hand; placing another wager on the value of the hand as a prerequisite for dealing a fourth card into the hand, or discontinuing play of the hand, thereby forfeiting the initial wager; if another wager has been placed, dealing a fourth card into the hand from the randomized deck; placing a further wager on the value of the hand as a prerequisite for dealing a fifth card into the hand, or discontinuing play of the hand, thereby forfeiting the previous wagers; if the further wager has been placed, dealing a fifth card into the hand from the randomized deck; then holding or discarding each card in the hand; dealing cards from the randomized deck to replace all discarded cards in the hand; determining the value of the hand; and paying to or receiving the value of the hand in accordance with predetermined payoff amounts.

This game can be played using conventional cards or using an electronic game machine providing card images.

Electronic devices for playing the game are also provided comprising: a display screen providing positions for placement of cards in a five-card poker hand; a processor programmed to provide images of a poker hand layout comprising vacant card positions and card images operably connected to the display screen; input means for inputting into the processor a wager on a poker hand to be displayed on the screen, and storing the amount of the wager in memory in the processor; a randomizer in the processor for randomizing the order of presentation to the screen of images corresponding to cards from a deck of cards; an initial deal activator responsive to input of the wager to activate display of card images on the screen corresponding to dealing an initial three cards into the hand; display means for displaying indicia for wagering or stopping play associated with the vacant fourth and fifth card positions for the hand; input means associated with the fourth card position for inputting into

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the processor a second wager to be displayed on the screen, and storing the amount of the wager in memory in the processor; input means associated with the fourth card position for inputting into the processor a stop signal to stop play of the game; display means responsive to input of the stop signal associated with the fourth card position to

5   indicate that the game is over, and optionally that the previous wager has been forfeited; deal activator means responsive to input of the second wager to activate display of a card image from the randomized deck in the fourth card position for the hand; input means associated with the fifth card position for inputting into the processor a third wager to be displayed on the screen, and storing the amount of the

10   wager in memory in the processor; input means associated with the fifth card position for inputting into the processor a stop signal to stop play of the game; display means responsive to input of the stop signal associated with the fifth card position to indicate that the game is over, and optionally that the previous wagers have been forfeited; deal activator means responsive to input of the third wager to activate display of a card

15   image from the randomized deck in the fifth card position for the hand; input means for providing operator signals to the processor corresponding to holding or discarding each card dealt into the hand; completion deal means in the processor capable of determining when all cards in the hand have been held or have been discarded, comprising a completion deal algorithm for dealing cards from the randomized deck in

20   a preset pattern to fill in all remaining available positions and complete the poker hand; a calculator in the processor for determining the value of the poker hand; and a display operably connected to the calculator to display a payoff or forfeited amount.

A method is also provided for simultaneously playing two hands of a poker game using two decks in which the play of cards in the second hand is optionally

25   dependent on cards in the first hand, the method comprising: placing an initial wager on the value of a first poker hand to be dealt; placing a second wager on the value of a second poker hand to be dealt; providing five positions for placement of cards in each hand; randomizing a card deck for dealing cards into the first hand; dealing three cards

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into the first hand; duplicating the three cards dealt into the first hand into the second hand from a second deck and randomizing the second deck or randomizing the second deck and dealing three cards from the second deck into the second hand; placing an additional wager on the value of the first hand as a prerequisite for dealing a fourth

5   card into the first hand, or discontinuing play of the first hand, thereby forfeiting the initial wager on the first hand; placing an additional wager on the value of the second hand as a prerequisite for dealing a fourth card into the second hand, or discontinuing play of the second hand, thereby forfeiting the initial wager on the second hand; if the additional wager has been placed on the first hand, dealing a fourth card into the first

10   hand from the first randomized deck; if the additional wager has been placed on the second hand, dealing a fourth card into the second hand from the second randomized deck; if play of the first hand has not been discontinued, placing a further wager on the value of the first hand as a prerequisite for dealing a fifth card into the first hand, or discontinuing play of the first hand, thereby forfeiting previous wagers on that hand; if

15   play of the second hand has not been discontinued, placing a further wager on the value of the second hand as a prerequisite for dealing a fifth card into the second hand, or discontinuing play of the second hand, thereby forfeiting previous wagers on that hand; if the further wager has been placed on the first hand, dealing a fifth card into the first hand from the first randomized deck; if the further wager has been placed on

20   the second hand, dealing a fifth card into the second hand from the second randomized deck; holding or discarding each card in any hand still being played; if play of the first hand has not been discontinued, dealing cards from the first randomized deck to replace all discarded cards in the first hand; if play of the second hand has not been discontinued, dealing cards from the second randomized deck to replace all discarded

25   cards in the second hand; determining the value of any hands still being played; and paying to or receiving the value of the hand(s) in accordance with predetermined payoff amounts.

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This game may also be played by hand or using an electronic device. Such an electronic device may comprise: a display screen providing positions for placement of cards in two five-card poker hands; a processor programmed to provide images of poker hand layouts comprising vacant card positions and card images operably connected to the display screen; input means for inputting into the processor a first wager on a first and second poker hand to be displayed on the screen, and storing the amount of the wager in memory in the processor; a randomizer in the processor for randomizing the order of presentation to the screen of images corresponding to cards from a first deck of cards; an initial deal activator responsive to input of the first wager to activate display of specific card images on the screen corresponding to dealing an initial three cards into the first hand from the first deck; input means for inputting into the processor a signal to duplicate the initial three cards of the first hand in the second hand; a randomizer in the processor for randomizing the order of presentation to the screen of images corresponding to cards from a second deck of cards; input means for inputting into the processor a signal to deal an initial three cards into the second hand from the second deck, which input means are operable only if the processor has not received a signal to duplicate the initial three cards of the first hand in the second hand; display means responsive to the signal to duplicate the initial three cards of the first hand in the second hand or to the signal to deal an initial three cards into the second hand from the second deck, for displaying the first three cards of the second hand; display means for displaying indicia for wagering or stopping play associated with the vacant fourth and fifth card positions for each hand; input means associated with the fourth card position of each hand for inputting into the processor a second wager on each hand to be displayed on the screen, and storing the amount of the wager in memory in the processor; input means associated with the fourth card position of each hand for inputting into the processor a stop signal to stop play of that hand; display means responsive to input of the stop signal associated with the fourth card position for each hand to indicate that the game is over with respect to that hand, and optionally that the previous wagers on that hand have been forfeited; deal

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activator means responsive to input of the second wager on each hand to activate display of a card image from the randomized deck in the fourth card position for that hand; input means associated with the fifth card position of each hand for inputting into the processor a third wager on each hand to be displayed on the screen, and

5   storing the amount of the wager in memory in the processor; input means associated with the fifth card position of each hand for inputting into the processor a stop signal to stop play of that hand; display means responsive to input of the stop signal associated with the fifth card position of each hand to indicate that the game is over with respect to that hand, and optionally that the previous wagers with respect to that

10   hand have been forfeited; deal activator means responsive to input of the third wager on each hand to activate display of a card image from the randomized deck for each hand in the fifth card position for that hand, if no stop signal has previously been received for that hand; input means for providing operator signals to the processor corresponding to holding or discarding each card dealt into any hand still in play;

15   completion deal means in the processor capable of determining when all cards in each hand in play have been held or discarded, comprising a completion deal algorithm for dealing cards from the first randomized deck into the first hand if it is still in play, and for dealing cards from the second randomized deck into the second hand if it is still in play, in a preset pattern to fill in all remaining available positions and complete any

20   poker hand still in play; a calculator in the processor for determining the value of any poker hand still in play; and a display operably connected to the calculator to display a payoff or forfeited amount.

The electronic games of this invention also comprise calculation means for calculating a running total of current wagers and the amount available for future

25   wagers. They may also have graphic displays such as colored lines, animated displays, and audible means such as gong sounds, buzzer sounds, and the like for indicating wins and losses.

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Games for simultaneously playing several hands using a single deck comprise providing positions for placement of cards in a plurality of poker hands; placing a wager on each poker hand or on the aggregate of said plurality of poker hands; randomizing a card deck as by shuffling or running a randomizing algorithm in a processor of a video game to provide cards in a random order; dealing an initial three to seven cards, e.g., three, five or seven, into a first hand from said randomized deck; holding or moving each card dealt into said first hand into positions provided for one more additional five-card hands; and when all cards in said first hand have been held or have been moved, dealing cards from the randomized deck in a preset pattern to fill in all remaining available positions and complete said poker hands; followed by determining the value of each poker hand and paying to or receiving from the player the value of each poker hand in accordance with predetermined payoff amounts.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Figures 1A through 1F illustrate a method of playing a single five-card poker hand as displayed on the screen of an electronic game machine.

Figures 2A through 2I illustrate a method of playing two five-card hands of poker using two separate decks as displayed on the screen of an electronic game machine.

Figures 3A through 3G illustrate an alternate play of the game of Figures 2A through 2I.

Figures 4A through 4G show play of the poker game of this invention in "shotgun" method using three hands with an initial deal of three cards into the first (middle) row, showing the player's decisions to successively hold or move cards from the first row into corresponding positions in the second (top) or third (bottom) rows.

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Figures 5A and 5B show play of the poker game of this invention in regular deal method using three hands, wherein the player has made a decision to hold all five cards initially dealt.

Figures 6A through 6E show play of the poker game in regular deal method using five hands.

Figure 7 shows the method of forming six additional secondary hands using the three-hand layout. Each continuous line designates a separate hand.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

The poker games of this invention are preferably played with the object of building standard winning poker hands such as royal flush (ten, jack, queen, king and ace of the same suit), straight flush (five sequential cards of the same suit), four of a kind (four cards of the same number), three of a kind (three cards of the same number) two of a kind (two cards of the same number), full house (three of a kind plus two of a kind), flush (five cards of the same suit), straight (five sequential cards, not of the same suit), two pairs (of cards having the same number), and pairs of jacks, queens, kings or aces. Payoffs can also be set to reward other combinations. Since the game provides for play of multiple hands, obtaining two or more of the same winning hand can be rewarded with bonus payoffs.

The player may place a wager on the outcome of each hand or on the total (aggregate) value of all the hands either at the beginning or during play, or both. For example, the player may wager a set number of coins to begin the game, and may add to or change his wager after the first, second, third, fourth or fifth positions have been

played as described below. The wagers may be made by inputting into a video game device.

The deck of cards is randomized by shuffling by a dealer or by means of an algorithm in the processor of the game machine to present cards in random order. The dealer then deals cards into positions provided for the first hand from the randomized deck, or the electronic game machine provides card images from said deck into said position. The term "deal" as used herein refers both to dealing actual cards and to providing virtual card images on a display screen. The initial deal is activated by the player's placing an initial wager or otherwise signaling the game machine to start play, e.g. by inserting coins or chips into the machine. After the initial deal, the player may optionally make other wagers on the value of the hands.

When play is finished, the value of each poker hand is determined using payoff tables or algorithms as described below, or other payoff tables as may be set by the house. As is known to the art, the percentage retained by casinos may be regulated by law. In addition, tables providing optimum player return, hit frequency (frequency of obtaining a reward), and other payoff statistics may be published, posted or displayed on casino games as an incentive to players. The payoff amounts may be calculated by algorithms known to the art to provide payoffs which are within the legally set limits and are also attractive to players. In a preferred embodiment using a casino-style electronic game machine, the payoff amounts may be adjustable.

The player may be paid off or required to pay amounts in accordance with the value of the completed hands. In preferred embodiments using an electronic game machine, an initial amount is set by the program or input by the player to begin play, and the machine calculates and displays the amount of money remaining including any

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winnings throughout a series of games until the player indicates he wishes to stop playing.

The games may be played "shotgun" style by dealing only three cards initially into the first hand, or normal style by dealing all five cards into the first hand.

5   Positions for placement of cards in each of the hands dealt are provided, either on a flat surface such as a table top, or on a display screen of a video game machine. In the video game machine, vacant positions are preferably indicated by card-shaped blanks.

As shown in Figure 1A, a display is provided showing positions for a five-card poker hand. The display includes a display of the amount wagered so far in the game,

10   and a total amount available to be wagered (the "bank"). Figure 1A shows nothing has as yet been wagered, and the bank has a balance of 1000 coins. Figure 1B shows that the player has wagered five coins to begin play, and that the bank now has a balance of 995 coins. The wager triggers dealing of three cards into the hand from a

15   randomized deck, and the display now shows images of these cards and indicates that the player can choose to make an additional wager to have a card dealt into the fourth position, or can elect to fold, and thereafter can make a further wager to have a card dealt into the fifth position, or can elect to fold. As shown in Figure 1C, the player wagered an additional 5 coins to have a further card dealt into the fourth position. The

20   screen now shows 10 coins wagered and a bank balance of 990 coins. Figure 1D shows that the player has made an additional five-coin wager to have a card dealt into the fifth position. The wager displayed is 15 coins, and the bank balance displayed is 985 coins. The player can now elect to hold or discard each card displayed, and Figure 1E shows that the player has elected to have the third card replaced. After

25   replacement of all cards the player elects to discard, the game is over, and the win or

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loss is calculated. A screen display, such as the jagged line shown in Figure 1F indicates the win or loss, and the screen displays a bank balance reflecting the win or loss. The player may indicate his elections by clicking on appropriate indicia, such as the space for display of the wager amount to make a wager, the word "wager" or

5 "fold" or other suitable indicia to wager or fold with respect to being dealt fourth and fifth cards, and by clicking on each card he desires to discard, or on a further indicia (not shown) if he wishes to keep a particular card, or has completed choosing cards to discard.

Figure 2A shows a display with positions for two five-card poker hands. A

10 display of the amount of the wager at risk in the game at each point is shown at the top left, and the current bank balance is shown at the bottom left. Figure 2B shows that the player has wagered 10 coins (5 coins to initiate play of each hand), and the bank has a balance of 990 coins. The wager has initiated dealing of three cards into the first (bottom) hand. The player may now elect to duplicate the three cards dealt in the first

15 hand into the second hand, e.g. by clicking on suitable indicia, or, e.g. by dragging duplicate images of the dealt cards in the first hand into the corresponding positions of the second hand. Alternatively (as shown in Figure 3) he may elect to have three new cards dealt into the second hand from a second randomized deck. Figure 2C indicates that he has elected to duplicate the three cards dealt into the first hand in the second

20 hand. The fourth and fifth card positions now display indicia providing the player with a choice to wager to trigger dealing of a card in that position, or to fold. Figure 2D shows that the player has elected to wager an additional 5 coins on the fourth card of the first hand, and has been dealt that card. The screen displays a wager of 15 coins at risk and a bank balance of 985 coins. Figure 2E shows that the player has elected to

25 wager an additional 5 coins on the fifth card of the first hand, and has been dealt that card. The screen displays a wager of 20 coins at risk and a bank balance of 980 coins. Figure 2F Shows that the player has elected to wager an additional 5 coins on the

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fourth card of the second hand, and has been dealt that card. The screen displays a wager of 25 coins at risk and a bank balance of 975 coins. Figure 2G shows that the player has elected to wager an additional 5 coins on the fifth card of the second hand, and has been dealt that card. The screen displays a wager of 30 coins at risk and a bank balance of 970 coins. The player is now allowed to choose whether to keep or discard each card on the screen. Figure 2H shows his decision to discard and replace the fourth card of the first hand and the third card in the second hand. Figure 2I shows a screen display indicating that the second hand is a winning hand and the first hand is a losing hand, and the bank balance is shown as 1085 coins, which includes a payoff for the winning hand.

In Figure 3A, a display is provided showing positions for two five-card poker hands. The display includes a display of the amount of the wager at risk in the game at each point, and the current bank balance, as above. Figure 3B shows that the player has wagered 10 coins (5 coins to initiate play of each hand), and the bank has a balance of 990 coins. The wager has initiated dealing of three cards into the first (bottom) hand. The player may now elect to duplicate the three cards dealt in the first hand into the second hand or to have three new cards dealt. As shown in Figure 3C, he elects to have three new cards dealt. Play now continues as described above for Figures 2A-2I.

This invention also provides methods for playing a plurality of games using a single deck. In the description that follows, the middle hand is referred to as the "first hand." In the three-hand layout as shown in Figures 4A-4G, containing three horizontal rows, the top hand is referred to as the "second hand" and the bottom hand is referred to as the "third hand." In the five-card layout, the cards may be laid out in five horizontal rows, or in three rows with the top and bottom rows containing two five-card hands as shown in Figures 6A-6E. The topmost row or, in the layout of

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Figures 6A-6E the top left hand, is referred to as the "second hand," the second row or, in the layout of Figures 6A-6E the top right hand, is referred to as the "third hand," the bottom row or the right bottom hand is referred to as the "fifth hand" and the second from the bottom row or, in the layout of Figures 6A-6E, the left bottom hand is referred to as the "fourth hand." The card positions of each hand are referred to herein as first, second, third, fourth and fifth from left to right.

The player makes an initial wager to initiate dealing a predetermined number of cards into the first hand. The player may then decide to hold or move each of the cards dealt into the first hand into positions provided for the other hands. When the player has moved all the cards out of the first hand, or when the player indicates he wishes to hold cards in the first hand, the held cards can no longer be moved, any remaining vacant positions in the other hands are filled in by dealing from the randomized deck to complete the hands. The dealing is done in preset order, e.g. by filling in vacant positions and hands in sequential order, or by filling in corresponding positions of all hands in sequential order before moving onto the next position in all the hands, or in any other desired preset order.

In one embodiment, the player must play the card in the first position of the first hand before being allowed to hold or move cards in subsequent positions. If the player decides to hold the card in the first position in the first hand, he may indicate this decision to the dealer, or in the case of an electronic game, may input a signal, such as by pressing a button, touching a spot on the screen, or answering "yes" to a displayed question. If he decides to move the card in the first position, he may move it only to the first position of another hand. He may manually move the card or provide a signal to the game machine as known to the art to cause the card image to move to the desired position. When the player has indicated his decision to hold the card in the first position of the first hand, play moves to the second position of the first hand.

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Play of the second position of the first hand is completed as described above for the first position, and when all vacant second positions in all the hands are filled, or when the player has indicated his decision to hold the card in the second position of the first hand, play moves to the third position. Play of third and subsequent positions of the first proceed in the same way. When all cards for the first hand have been played, or the player indicates his decision to hold remaining cards, all vacant positions in all the hands are filled in by cards dealt from the randomized deck.

In the "shotgun" method where only three cards were initially dealt into the first hand, after the player has played the third position or indicated his decision to hold remaining cards, all vacant positions in the hands are filled in as above.

Each hand layout comprising positions one through five is referred to herein as a "primary hand." In addition to determining the poker hand value of the primary hands at the completion of the game, poker hand values for secondary hands made up of selected cards from the primary hands may also be determined and used to calculate payoff amounts, for example as shown in Figure 7.

Figure 4A shows a three-hand embodiment of the poker game of this invention in which three cards are dealt in "shotgun" style, i.e. an initial deal of three cards is made into the first (middle) hand from a 52-card deck containing ace through king of four suits. The game may be played with actual cards, or with virtual cards in a video game device as shown, in which the 52 cards are randomized and dealt in random order. In the video game embodiment, positions or spaces for the card images are provided for three rows of five cards each. A screen display keeps a running tally of the player's winnings, preferably the number of coins available to wager. Each time a new card is dealt, the player may also optionally make an additional wager on each hand.

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After the initial deal of three cards into the first (middle) hand, the player makes a decision to hold or move the card in the first position of the first hand. He may move the card to the corresponding (first) position of the second hand (the top row) or the corresponding (first) position of the third hand (the bottom row). In the embodiment shown, the player has decided to hold the card (the six of hearts) in the first position of the first hand. He may indicate this decision either by inputting a hold signal or by inputting a signal to move or hold the card in the second position of the first row. Once the card in the second position of the first hand is activated, the player can no longer move the card in the first position. Once a card has been moved into another hand from the first hand, that card cannot be moved again.

As shown in Figure 4B, the player has decided to move the card in the second position of the first hand (the jack of diamonds) to the corresponding second position of the second hand.

The player is now able to decide to hold or move the card in the third position of the first hand (the six of clubs). As shown in Figure 4C, the player decides to hold this card. A new card is now dealt into the fourth position of the first hand, optionally as a result of a wager by the player.

Figure 4D shows that the player has decided to move the new card (the queen of clubs) dealt into the fourth position of the first hand into the fourth position of the third hand. Figure 4E shows a new card is now dealt into the fifth position of the first hand (the ten of diamonds). Again, optionally as a result of a further wager, Figure 4F shows that the player has elected to move this card into the fifth position of the second hand.

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When all cards originally dealt into the first hand have been moved or held, the remaining vacant positions in all three hands are filled in by dealing from the 52-card randomized deck as shown in Figure 4G. The cards may be filled in in any preprogrammed order, for example, the open positions in the second hand may be filled in sequentially, followed by sequentially filling in the open positions in the third hand; or cards may be alternately dealt into the next open position in the second or third hands, or in any other desired order.

The poker hand value of all three hands is then determined, and the player is paid off in accordance with a payoff schedule as described below.

When the game is played using a normal five-card deal into the first hand rather than using the "shotgun" method of dealing only three cards initially, the player makes his wagers as described above, and makes decisions to hold or move the cards in each position of the first hand sequentially. He is not allowed to move a card from the first hand until all possible vacant spaces in lower-numbered positions are filled in all the hands, or until he has signaled his decision to hold the cards in the lower-numbered positions of the first hand.

Figures 5A and 5B show the three-hand game using a normal five-card deal into the first hand. In this embodiment, five cards are dealt from a randomized 52-card deck into the first hand as shown in Figure 5A. The player in this case has decided to hold all the cards in the first hand. Upon his signal indicating this decision, the remaining vacant spaces are filled with cards dealt from the same deck in any desired, preprogrammed order, as shown in Figure 5B. The poker hand value of all three hands is then determined, and the player is paid off in accordance with a payoff schedule.

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Figures 6A through 6E show the five-hand game of this invention using a normal deal method wherein five cards are initially dealt into the first (middle) hand as shown in Figure 6A. The player makes his wagers on each hand as described above. Figure 6B shows the player's decision to move the card in the first position of the first hand (the two of hearts) into the first position of the second hand (top left). Figure 6C shows the player has elected to move the second card in the first hand (the 3 of clubs) to the second position of the fourth hand (bottom left).

Figure 6D shows the player has elected to retain the card dealt into the third position of the first hand (the jack of diamonds) where it is, and to move the card dealt into the fourth position of the first hand (the four of spades) into the third hand (top left), and to leave the fifth card dealt into the first hand (the queen of diamonds) where it is.

Now that all cards in the first hand have been played, as shown in Figure 6E, the remaining vacant spaces in all the hands are filled in in a pre-programmed order using cards from the 52-card deck. The value of all the hands is then determined, and the player paid off accordingly.

Figures 7A through 7F show how the game may be adapted to allow wagering on nine hands simultaneously. The regular three-hand layout is used as described with reference to Figure 4, and played using either the shotgun or regular dealing method. The first, second and third hands (the "primary" hands) are then evaluated along with the secondary hands according to the patterns shown in Figures 7A-7F, with the lines showing the cards used to make up each hand. In addition to the three horizontal hands making up a hand each, six secondary hands are made up using the cards joined by each continuous line. Payoff is made based on all nine hands. In Figure 7, the secondary hands are made up of the following combinations:

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Figure 7A: Combination 1:   Second hand, positions 1, 3 and 5, First hand, positions 2 and 4.

Figure 7B: Combination 2:   Second hand, positions 1 and 5, First hand, positions 2 and 4, third hand, position 3;

Figure 7C: Combination 3:   Second hand, positions 2 and 4, First hand, positions 1, 3 and 5;

Figure 7D: Combination 4:   Second hand, position 3, First hand, positions 2 and 4, Third hand, positions 1 and 5.

Figure 7E: Combination 5:   First hand, positions 1, 3 and 5, Third hand positions 2 and 4;

Figure 7F: Combination 6:   First hand, positions 2 and 4, Third hand, positions 1, 3 and 5.

The electronic poker game of this invention therefore comprises a display screen providing positions for placement of cards in a plurality of poker hands and a processor programmed to provide images of a poker hand layout comprising card images and vacant card positions operably connected to said display screen. The electronic game also comprises means for inputting into said electronic game a wager on each of, or on the aggregate of, said plurality of poker hands and means for storing the amount of said wager in memory in said processor. Such input means may include any means known to the art, including buttons, touch screen displays, and means for answering "yes" or "no" to questions programmed to appear on the screen. The processor also includes a randomizer, i.e. an algorithm for ordering card images randomly for presentation. Cards images corresponding to cards from one or more decks may be used. The electronic game also comprises an initial deal activator, which may be any means known to the art for initiating play, preferably a programmed response within the processor responsive to input of said wager or other player signal known to the art to activate display of specific card images on said screen

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corresponding to dealing an initial three to seven cards sequentially into the first, second, third and optionally fourth and fifth positions of the first hand from said deck. The game includes input means as discussed above to allow the operator to provide signals to the processor corresponding to holding or moving each card dealt into the first hand into positions provided for one more additional five-card hands, and means for displaying the results of the signal on the screen, i.e., displaying the image of the moved or held card in the designated position. The game also includes a completion deal program step in the processor capable of determining when all cards in the first hand have been held or have been moved into unfilled spaces in said additional hands and dealing cards from the randomized deck in a preset pattern to fill in all remaining available positions and complete the poker hands. The game device also comprises a calculator in the processor for determining the value of the poker hands and a display operably connected to the calculator to display a payoff amount.

In addition to displays showing the hands in play, the games of this invention may be programmed to display the amount wagered on each hand and the payoff figures at the end of each game. In one embodiment, the player inserts money or chips into the machine to initiate play, and the screen displays a running tally of the amount of money remaining. In addition, the game may be programmed to display by means of lights, flashing lights, or other suitable means, with or without accompanying sounds, when valuable poker hands such as a full house, two of a kind, etc. have been accomplished in any hand on the screen.

The payoffs can be set to provide bonus amounts for multiple payoff hands such as two straights or three flushes, and the like.

In an embodiment using a three-hand game, with an initial wager of three coins, the payoff amounts might be set as shown in Table 1.

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TABLE 1

3 COINS	PAYS
Royal Flush	1000
Straight Flush	50
Four of a Kind	25
Full House	9
Flush	6
Straight	4
Three of a Kind	3
Two Pair	2
Pair of Jacks or better	1

Table 2 provides exemplary payoff amounts for a three-hand game using an initial wager of six coins, and includes double bonus payoff amounts for having more than one of certain winning hands.

TABLE 2

6 COINS	PAYS	DOUBLE BONUS
Royal Flush	2000	1000
Straight Flush	100	50
Four of a Kind	50	10
Full House	18	6
Flush	12	4
Straight	8	
Three of a Kind	6	
Two Pair	4	
Pair of Jacks or better	2	

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Table 3 provides exemplary payoff amounts for a three-hand game using an initial wager of nine coins, and includes triple bonus payoff amounts for having three of certain winning hands.

TABLE 3

9 COINS	PAYS	TRIPLE BONUS
Royal Flush	3000	2000
Straight Flush	150	100
Four of a Kind	75	50
Full House	27	30
Flush	18	20
Straight	12	10
Three of a Kind	9	-
Two Pair	6	-
Pair of Jacks or better	3	

Table 4 provides exemplary payoff amounts of a five-hand game using an initial wager of five coins.

TABLE 4

5 COINS	PAYS
Royal Flush	1000
Straight Flush	50
Four of a Kind	25
Full House	9
Flush	6
Straight	4
Three of a Kind	3
Two Pair	2
Pair of Jacks or better	1

Table 5 provides exemplary payoff amounts for a five-hand game using an initial wager of ten coins, and includes double bonus payoff amounts for having more than one of certain winning hands.

TABLE 5

10 COINS	PAYS	DOUBLE BONUS
Royal Flush	2000	1000
Straight Flush	100	50
Four of a Kind	50	10
Full House	18	6
Flush	12	4
Straight	8	2
Three of a Kind	6	-
Two Pair	4	-
Pair of Jacks or better	2	-

Table 6 provides exemplary payoff amounts for a five-hand game using an initial wager of fifteen coins, and includes triple bonus payoff amounts for having three of certain winning hands.

TABLE 6

15 COINS	PAYS	TRIPLE BONUS
Royal Flush	3000	2000
Straight Flush	150	100
Four of a Kind	75	50
Full House	27	30
Flush	18	20
Straight	12	10
Three of a Kind	9	
Two Pair	6	
Pair of Jacks or better	3	

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Table 7 provides exemplary payoff amounts for a five-hand game using an initial wager of twenty coins, and includes quadruple bonus payoff amounts for having four of certain winning hands.

TABLE 7

20 COINS	PAYS	QUADRUPLE BONUS
Royal Flush	4000	6000
Straight Flush	200	500
Four of a Kind	100	200
Full House	36	100
Flush	24	50
Straight	16	30
Three of a Kind	12	-
Two Pair	8	-
Pair of Jacks or better	4	-

Table 8 provides exemplary payoff amounts for a five-hand game using an initial wager of twenty-five coins, and includes quintuple bonus payoff amounts for having five of certain winning hands.

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TABLE 8

25 COINS	PAYS	5-WAY BONUS
Royal Flush	5000	10000
Straight Flush	250	1000
Four of a Kind	125	500
Full House	42	100
Flush	30	50
Straight	20	-
Three of a Kind	15	-
Two Pair	10	-
Pair of Jacks or better	5	-

Table 9 provides exemplary payoff amounts for a nine-hand game (using three primary and six secondary hands as shown in Figures 7A-7F) and an initial wager of nine coins.

TABLE 9

9COINS	PAYS
Royal Flush	1000
Straight Flush	50
Four of a Kind	25
Full House	9
Flush	6
Straight	4
Three of a Kind	3
Two Pair	2
Pair of Jacks or better	1

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Table 10 provides exemplary payoff amounts for a nine-hand game and an initial wager of 18 coins with double bonus payoff amounts for having two of certain winning hands.

TABLE 10

18 COINS	PAYS	DOUBLE BONUS
Royal Flush	2000	1000
Straight Flush	100	50
Four of a Kind	50	10
Full House	18	6
Flush	12	4
Straight	8	-
Three of a Kind	6	-
Two Pair	4	-
Pair of Jacks or better	2	-

Table 11 provides exemplary payoff amounts for a nine-hand game and an initial wager of 27 coins having triple bonus payoffs for having three of certain hands.

TABLE 11

27 COINS	PAYS	TRIPLE BONUS
Royal Flush	3000	2000
Straight Flush	150	100
Four of a Kind	75	50
Full House	27	30
Flush	18	20
Straight	12	10
Three of a Kind	9	-
Two Pair	6	-
Pair of Jacks or better	3	

The poker game and game device of this invention has been illustrated by specific embodiments, however as will be apparent to those of skill in the art, equivalent means for carrying out the invention, and equivalent method steps may be provided within the scope of the claims hereof.